



rivers&trails

National
Park
Service



rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program

PASEOS VERDES – THE RIO TRAILS

Project Goal

To establish an environmentally sensitive and sustainable network of multi-use trails, greenways, and open spaces to link the communities of McAllen, Mission, and Hidalgo

Background

The communities of McAllen, Mission, and Hidalgo on the South Texas border with Mexico enjoy unique natural and cultural resources. The region's sub-tropical climate is home to an ecological diversity rivaled, in the United States, only by the Florida Everglades. The region has become such a popular birding destination that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is building the multi-million dollar World Birding Center, an international visitor and interpretive center. With a mean average temperature of 74 degrees, the region enjoys a year-round growing season and one of the nation's richest agriculture-based economy. The culture is a unique mix of Spanish colonial heritage, a large immigrant population from Latin America, and during the winter months, an influx of Midwestern retirees known as Winter Texans. The region's proximity to and political history with Mexico results in a unique blend of language, food, music, and customs. The cities of McAllen, Mission, and Hidalgo have created a partnership planning effort to develop a regional greenways plan, recognizing that the many benefits include:

- Infrastructure for the birding, eco-tourism and heritage tourism industries.
- Recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors.

- Corridors for wildlife movement.
- Opportunities for non-motorized transportation.
- Opportunities for health and physical fitness.
- Outdoor learning classrooms.
- Preservation of links between cultural and historic sites.

“Winter Texans” Enjoy Walking Community Trails.



National Park Service Role

RTCA is facilitating the planning process, helping project partners accomplish the necessary steps to development of a regional greenway system. RTCA assisted project partners in identifying and involving stakeholder groups, resulting in the formation of a public/private multi-disciplinary planning team. Project partners have looked to RTCA to create opportunities for public input and involvement. RTCA initiated the public input process by hosting survey booth at area cultural festivals

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and events. Over 600 surveys were collected at two events, revealing an overwhelming demand for trails and greenways. RTCA has also assisted the project by coordinating the development of public outreach materials in both English and Spanish. Future RTCA involvement will focus on finalizing the regional greenways plan and on developing action strategies for funding and implementation of the plan.

Project Results to Date

- The formation of a public/private multidisciplinary planning team.
- Consensus development of a bilingual project name and logo.
- Development of a classification system for greenway design and management.
- Development of public outreach materials in both English and Spanish.
- Groundbreaking for construction of two bicycle/pedestrian trails in McAllen totaling 8 miles.

Trails Survey Booth at Citrus Fiesta

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Project Partners

- City of McAllen - Owner/manager of existing and future trail/greenway corridors and facilities.
- City of Mission - Owner/manager of future trail/greenway corridors and facilities.
- City of Hidalgo - Owner/manager of future trail/greenway corridors and facilities.
- Texas Department of Transportation - Funding source and assistance with design.

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